KITCHEN SINK COMIX
JAXON & 'BULTO' RETURN!
No. 12
MATURE READERS
$2.00
($2.80 Canada)
DEATH RATTLE
jaxon·87

JAXON & BULTO • FINCH & HUGHES • STILES & EC

Yes, it's time once again for ***Death Rattle***, the 12th issue to be specific. Let the joy flow unrestrained, for we welcome back for the occasion the inimitable **Jaxon** and his cute little pal, "Bulto, the Cosmic Slug"! Last seen in issue six, we begin the story with a two-page recap of the story so far. To commemorate the prodigal's return, **Jaxon** has rendered a memorable cover, lushly colored by **Peter Poplaski**. A suitable appetizer for the banquet within.

Next up, we present a newcomer to the comic book field, **Matthew Finch** and his true account of **Howard Hughes'** obsession with radiation and the last film he produced, "The Conqueror." The story is entitled "More Horrible than Human Excrement," and Finch assures us the title refers to radiation, and not to the movie. Seriously, the story shows how atomic testing in the desert led to cancer among an extraordinary number of the cast and crew of the movie, and of Hughes' fight to keep himself clean of the contamination.

Finally, we welcome back **Steve Stiles** with his EC homage science fiction story, "The Arrivals." It's the story of ugly Americans among the colonies—the outer space colonies. Mr. Stiles is currently working with **Mark Schultz** on ***Xenozoic Tales***, KSP's new speculative fiction title. Alert readers will remember Schultz debuted his work in these pages in issue eight, and if you haven't checked out the title, we urge you to do so as soon as you've finished reading ***Death Rattle***. No excuses now—go out and get it!

Incidentally, after our surly plea for letters in the last issue, we were relatively inundated with thoughtful missives, and we're publishing the best in the back of the book. Thanks to all who wrote, but remember, your work isn't over yet. Write!

Next issue: Acclaimed artist **Robert Burger** contributes the cover for lucky issue 13, due on the stands in November! We're going to have another installment of "Bulto" from **Jaxon**, the return of those madcaps **P. S. Mueller** and **Bill Hartwig** doing "The Voices in My Head." The return of **Joe Schmough** and the debut of writer **Nick Petras** in "Little Magic." And, the debut of illustrator **Daryl Hutchinson** with an adaptation of **Edgar Allan Poe's** "Masque of the Red Death." Yow!

Staff

Editor/Publisher . . . . . **Denis Kitchen**
Story Editor . . . . . **Dave Schreiner**
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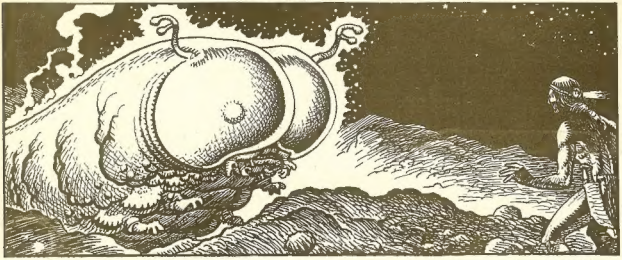
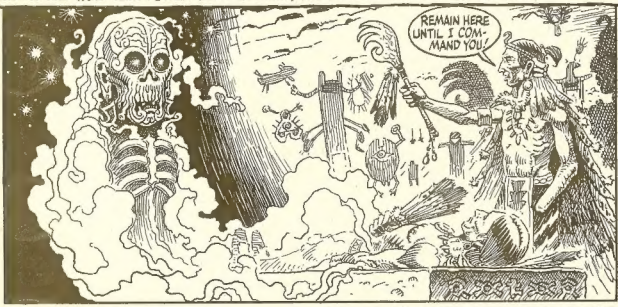
Watch for *Death Rattle* lucky No. 13 in November! Send some letters!

Death Rattle No. 12, September 1987. Published bi-monthly by Kitchen Sink Press, Inc., No. 2 Swamp Rd., Princeton WI 54968. Cover copyright © 1987 b **Jaxon**; "Bulto" copyright © 1987 by **Jaxon**; "More Horrible than Human Excrement" copyright © 1987 by **Matthew Finch**; "The Arrivals" copyright © 198 by **Steve Stiles** Entire contents copyright © 1987 by **Kitchen Sink Press, Inc.** All rights reserved. Price: $2.00 per copy in U.S., $2.80 in Canada. Submissio must be accompanied by a **stamped, self-addressed envelope** or **we will not be responsible for replies or returns! We mean it!** Printed in USA.
ART CARBUNKLE SCAN 01-17-06

OUR STORY THUS FAR: AT A TIME BEYOND MEMORY, A STAR FELL TO EARTH BEARING ZULTHU, INTERGALACTIC VOYAGER. WITNESSING THE ARRIVAL WAS XOTL, A FARAON APACHE WARRIOR. WHEN HIS HAND BECAME TRAPPED IN THE SLUG'S SLIMY RESIDUE, SILVER, A NEW CULT WAS BORN, WITH XOTL AS HIGH PRIEST.



AFTER HIM THERE FOLLOWED AN UNBROKEN CHAIN OF OTHERS. ZULTHU TAUGHT HIS DISCIPLES MANY SECRETS AND GAVE THEM POWER OVER BULTOS, THE LINGERING SPIRITS OF THE DEAD.

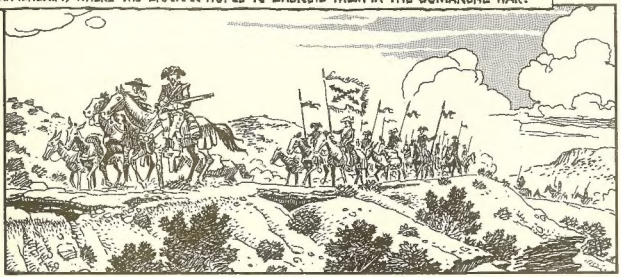


THEN CAME TWO INTRUDERS—COMANCHES AND SPANIARDS. TO SAVE THEMSELVES FROM THEIR STRONGER FOE, THE FARAONES MADE PEACE WITH THE WEAKER.

SEEING THEIR GREED FOR SILVER, AN ENVOY WAS SENT TO THE SPANISH FORT WITH SACKS OF ZULTHU'S METAL.

A SADDLER, JOSEF GUZMAN, AND HIS YOUNG HELPER, DIEGO, WERE THEN GUIDED TO AN ORE-RICH CAVERN.

IT WORKED. SOON, TREASURE-HUNGRY SOLDIERS WERE MARCHING WITH GUZMAN TO APACHERIA, WHERE THE SHAMAN HOPED TO EMBROIL THEM IN THE COMANCHE WAR.



BUT BLOCKING THE EXPLOITATION OF THE CAVE'S RICHES, THEY FOUND THEIR OLD INDIAN GUIDE, WHOSE BULTO HAD BEEN LEFT TO STAND ETERNAL GUARD!

Bulto...

WE RECOILED IN HORROR FROM THE SINISTER APPARITION — ALL BUT FRAY LOPEZ, WHO STOOD FAST.

BACK, DEMON FROM HELL — BACK!!

IN A STRUGGLE AS OLD AS TIME, FINALLY THE BULTO YIELDED...

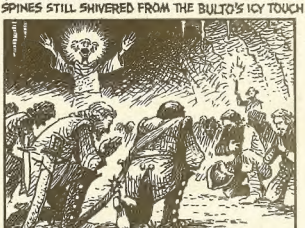
SSCHUK

THE BLOOD OF CHRIST COMMANDS YOU!

"IT IS SAFE NOW, MY CHILDREN," SAID THE PRIEST, "SATAN HAS DEPARTED." BUT AT THE SIGHT OF THE OLD APACHE'S REMAINS, OUR COURAGE FAILED US AGAIN...

LOOK!! THE FLESH HAS MELTED AWAY..

WE KNELT TO GIVE THANKS FOR THE MIRACLE, BUT OUR SPINES STILL SHIVERED FROM THE BULTO'S ICY TOUCH.



AS THE PRIEST ENGAGED IN WISTFUL RITES OF PURIFICATION, GUZMAN AND I TOOK MIRANDA DEEPER INTO THE CAVE...

THERE, GENERAL... JUST AS I SAID!!

TO SAY THAT DON BERNARDO WAS PLEASED IS INADEQUATE. HE STRUTTED AROUND LIKE PIZARRO IN THE INCA TREASURE ROOM.

BUT THE ECHO OF HIS FIENDISH LAUGHTER, STRANGLED HIDEOUSLY ON ITS RETURN FROM THE BOWELS BEYOND, QUICKLY DROVE SMILES AWAY.

EAGER FOR THE WHOLESOME TOUCH OF SUNLIGHT, WE SET ABOUT FILLING OUR SACKS.

THE GUTTURAL RUMBLING GREW *LOUDER*, AS IF THE CURSE LEFT ON THE APACHE SILVER WAS APPROACHING OUT OF THE DARKNESS.

MIRANDA, SHAKEN, DID NOT ARGUE. WE RETREATED WITH WHAT DIGNITY WE COULD MUSTER.

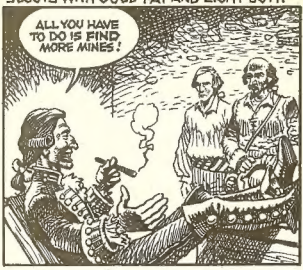
OUTSIDE WE FOUND PANDEMONIUM!

WE WERE MORE CAREFUL ON THE HOMEWARD TREK.

UNKNOWN TO US, ON A HILL ABOVE, THE FARAÓN BRUJO, COYOTE TWO FEET, WATCHED OUR PROGRESS.

SAFE IN BEXAR, THE LT. GENERAL WAS GENEROUS WITH OUR DISCOVERY.

HE APPOINTED GUZMAN AND ME SPECIAL SCOUTS WITH GOOD PAY AND LIGHT DUTY.



SAMPLES OF THE ORE WERE SENT SOUTH FOR TESTS. MIRANDA WAS CONFIDENT OF THE RESULTS.

HE ASKED THE VICEROY TO ERECT A SPECIAL PRESIDIO IN APACHERÍA TO GUARD MINING OPERATIONS.

NONETHELESS, THE VICEROY'S COUNCIL WAS IMPRESSED WITH THE ASSAY RESULTS.

SO IMPRESSED THAT FALSE FINDINGS WERE CIRCULATED.

WHEN THE LT. GENERAL LEARNED OF THE "POOR" RESULTS, HIS DISAPPOINTMENT WAS SEVERE.

CONVINCED THAT THE VICEROY MEANT TO STEAL "HIS" MINE, MIRANDA FLED TO FRENCH LOUISIANA.

SOME SAID THAT HE WAS SEEN FREQUENTING NEW ORLEANS TAVERNS IN LATER YEARS, FOOLISHLY WAVING AROUND A CHART...

...AND THAT HE MET HIS END IN A BACK ALLEY.

MEANWHILE, FATHER LOPEZ WAS BUSY.

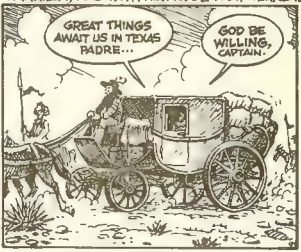
LOPEZ CONVINCED HIS QUERÉTARAN BRETHREN THAT THEY SHOULD MOVE THEIR RECENTLY-FAILED SAN XAVIER MISSIONS TO THE APACHE BADLANDS.

THE ROYAL COUNCIL, SWAYED BY THE ASSAY OF MIRANDA'S ORE, WAS RECEPTIVE TO THE IDEA.

A RICH MINE OWNER NAMED TERREROS PROVIDED THE SOLUTION.

IT JUST SO HAPPENED THAT HIS COUSIN WAS A PRIEST, YEARNING FOR AN OPPORTUNITY AMONG THE HEATHEN APACHE.

THE COUNCIL PICKED A COMMANDER THEY COULD COUNT ON TO BE DISCREET. HIS NAME WAS ORTIZ PARRILLA, AND WITH HIM RODE FRAY TERREROS



BUT WHEN TERREROS REFUSED TO ALLOW THE TEXAS MISSIONARIES TO PARTICIPATE IN HIS NEW ENDEAVOR, BITTERNESS QUICKENED.

WHILE THIS FEUD SIMMERED AMONG THE PRIESTHOOD, COYOTE TWO FEET SHOWED UP AT BEXAR.

THAT NIGHT A DISGRUNTLED RELATIVE OF OLD COCHATA CAME TO GUZMAN'S SADDLE SHOP.

HE TOLD US HOW HIS KINSMAN HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED TO BRING US SILVER, THEN WAS DOUBLE-CROSSED AND MURDERED! THE TRIBE WHISPERED ABOUT STRANGE RITUALS IN A CAVE...

LATER HE LED US TO A MINE HIGH ON THE SAN SABA'— A MINE FAR RICHER THAN ALMAGRES.

NEAR THE REAR WALL A STRANGE CONFIGURATION LAY ON THE CAVERN FLOOR, AS IF SOME MONSTROUS INSECT HAD SHED ITS SHELL!!

WHAT IS THIS THING, DON JOSEF?

OUR GUIDE COULD NOT EXPLAIN IT...

ZULTHU!

WELL, WHATEVER IT WAS, ITS SKIN IS SOLID SILVER NOW! Amazing..

THIS TIME OUR RETURN TO BÉXAR WAS DOGGED BY COMANCHE, NOT APACHE, WARRIORS. ODD..

jaxon • 87 (While working on this chapter, Samuel Angus Herington Jackson was born, June 26th. Welcome to Planet Earth, son!)

To Be Continued..

BACK ISSUES STILL AVAILABLE

UNDERGROUND COMICS

AFTERSHOCK: futuristic tales of the sexual wars. All women artists ________ 2.00

ALIEN FIRE 1: NEW BI-MONTHLY SERIES! **Eric Vincent and Anthony F. Smith combine to produce the best researched and planned science fiction comic ever! There's plenty of great action and greater aliens as a trading vessel visits a quarantined Earth in search of artifacts. You're going to love this one!** ________ 2.00

ALIEN FIRE 2: Vincent and **Smith** continue their saga. In this one, a race goes mad when exposed to a simple Earthian child's game! Great thoughtful series. ________ 2.00

ANARCHY 1: Jay Kinney an Archie parody. International crew of artists ________ 2.00

ANARCHY 2: When politics can be laughed at, it's a state of and this comic is true to its title: fine graphic cover. **Jay Kinney** edits. ________ 1.25

ANARCHY 3: more pages; featuring **Cliff Harper, Spain; Peter Pontiac** cover 2.50

BANZAI: zany laffs from **Joel Beck** (a close look at the comics collecting racket); a **Kim Deitch** trio of hilarity; and a scary story from the late **Roger Brand** ________ JUST 1.00

BAREFOOTZ 2: Howard Cruse creates a devastatingly funny world of frogs, roaches and the mysterious "Glory," all observed by a true bigfoot character! ________ 1.25

BIZARRE SEX 1: Seminal **Kitchen** cover leads off this great series which takes a cockeyed view of sex! Inside: **Mitchell, Boxell, Glassford, Clyne** ________ 2.00

BIZARRE SEX 5: Features Waller's 'Omaha' (reprinted from DOPE 5), **R. Crumb, Cruse, Corben cover** ________ 2.00

BIZARRE SEX 6: magazine-sized comics cover by **Richard Corben** ________ 2.00

BIZARRE SEX 7: cover by **John Pound; Richard Larson** ________ 2.00

BIZARRE SEX 8: H. Cruse story; **R. Crumb** cover; much more! ________ 2.00

BIZARRE SEX 9: the introduction of **Reed Waller's** "Omaha the Cat Dancer." Special, expanded issue introduced the character that's now a bi-monthly book. Steaming scenes of sex life and death in the city! ________ 2.00

BIZARRE SEX 10: Reed Waller 'Omaha' epilogue **Bil Stout** cover 2.00

BLOOD ON THE MOON Jaxon's gripping true tale of Quanah Parker 1.25

BLAB 1: A tribute to EC Comics (MAD, horror and war comics), features art by top cartoonists. 80 pages. **Spain, Deitch, Kitchen, Wilson, Green** ________ 6.95

BOP: Big magazine about comics and music. Included: **Toth, Jerry Lee Lewis, Pekar** 2.75

BORDER WORLDS 1 Donald Simpson, creator of **MEGATON MAN,** takes a different tack in this serious story about life on the edge of the universe! A LIMITED SUPPLY of this b&w remain. Great art and story ________ 1.95

BORDER WORLDS 2: The story continues as refugee-fugitives from Earth make their way to the space station. Exciting new work from **Donald Simpson!** ________ 1.95

BORDER WORLDS 3. Donald Simpson's saga continues as the refugees flee the Border Police on the space station! Great stuff! ________ 1.95

BORDER WORLDS 4: Taking the comics world by storm, this fine work by Donald Simpson is garnering accolades. Find out why ________ 2.00

BORDER WORLDS 5: The saga continues on the space station ________ 2.00

CARTOON HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSE: Series by cartoonist-scholar Larry Gonick recounts in a funny, accurate way the origin of the universe. Supply limited.

CARTOON HISTORY 3: "River Realms." 2.00

CARTOON HISTORY 5: "Brains and Bronze (Greece)" 2.00

CHECKERED DEMON 1: demonic collection by **S. Clay Wilson** 1.50

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CHERRY POPTART 1: Hot item! Sexy tales by **Larry Welz.** 2.50

CHERRY POPTART 2: More risque stories by **Larry Welz.** ________ 2.50

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COCAINE COMIX 1 Chop! 1.50 **COCAINE COMIX 3: Ahhh!** 1.50

COCAINE COMIX 2: Snort! 1.50 **COCAINE COMIX 4: Bust!** ________ 1.50

COMMIES FROM MARS 3: A wacky look at The Red Planet **Boxell, Pound.** 1.50

COMMIES FROM MARS 4 Boxell, S. Clay Wilson, Spain. ________ 2.00

COMMIES FROM MARS 5: More zippy sagas of alien oppression ________ 2.00

COMPLETE CHEECH WIZARD 1 Collection of Vaughn Bode's classic work. 2.25

CORPORATE CRIME 1 Limited supply left of this groundbreaking work featuring stories about how big business tries to kill us. Hard-hitting, factual. ________ 1.25

CLASS WAR: England's Clifford Harper paints a utopian society 1.00

CRYSTAL NIGHT: Sharon Rudahl s[illegible] epic about genetic memory. ________ 1.25

DEATH RATTLE Vol 2, No. 1: All-color horror-science fiction, with creepy-crawly stories by **Holmes, Burns, Charles Dallas.** ________ 2.00

DEATH RATTLE 2: More all-color comix with **Holmes, Eisner, Jaxon** 2.00

DEATH RATTLE 3: Doug Hansen, Jaxon, Stiles in more all color weirdness. 2.00

DEATH RATTLE 4: Holmes, Baron, Jaxon and more in all color horror tales. 2.00

DEATH RATTLE 5: Holmes, Baron, Wolverton, Jaxon in power lineup in color! 2.00

DEATH RATTLE 6: b&w. Holmes, Strnad, Veitch, Bissette, Jaxon ________ 2.00

DEATH RATTLE 7: Too gruesome for color! **Spain, Stiles, Stout, Ed Gein!** 2.00

DEATH RATTLE 8: 'Xenozoic Tales' preview! More horror madness. 2.00

DEATH RATTLE 9: Holmes, Wolverton, Schmough 2.00

DEATH RATTLE 10 Williamson, Frazetta, Baron, Burns! 2.00

DESPAIR: R. Crumb reprint about angst. Classic! 1.50

DOPIN' DAN 1: Ted Richards' unmilitary private in Vietnam. 1.25

DOPIN DAN 4: Dan joins today's Action Army... again! 1.50

DOPE COMIX 2: John Pound cover; top artists inside 1.50

DOPE COMIX 3: Lynch, Cruse, Stiles, Steffen ________ 1.50

DR. ATOMIC 6: Larry Todd's doctor invents and adventures ________ 1.50

FANDOM CONFIDENTIAL: Funny lampoon of comics: 8 pages of **John Byrne** 2.95

FAT FREDDY'S CAT 1: The Freaks' cat steps out! ________ 1.25

FAT FREDDY'S CAT 2: Gilbert Shelton at his funniest ________ 1.25

FAT FREDDY'S CAT 3: One tough feline! ________ 1.25

FAT FREDDY'S CAT 5: Makes Garfield look like a wimp! ________ 1.25

FAT FREDDY'S CAT 6: Comic book size collection of new adventures! 2.25

FAT FREDDY'S COMICS & STORIES: Limited supply! **Shelton** ________ 1.50

FAT FREDDY'S COMICS & STORIES 2 NEW! All Shelton story and art 2.00

FEELGOOD FUNNIES 2: special Tarzan issue by **Foolbert Sturgeon!** ________ 2.00

GAY COMIX 1 Cruse, Marrs, Holmes, LIMITED SUPPLY ________ 1.50

GAY COMIX 2: Cruse cover and story. Highly praised. ________ 1.50

GAY COMIX 4: Cruse edits and contributes story on AIDS. Sensitive but hard hitting! 2.00

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FREAK BROS. 2:	1.50	FREAK BROS. 7:	2.00
FREAK BROS. 3:	1.50	FREAK BROS. 8: color!	2.00
FREAK BROS. 4:	1.50	FREAK BROS. 9: color!	2.00
FREAK BROS. 5:	1.50		

FREAK BROS. 10 NEW! COMING SOON! **The all-color conlusion to 'Idiots Abroad' started in 8. We've been waiting for this one!** 2.25

GAY COMIX 5 Robert Triptow edits, humorous slant. 2.00

GAY COMIX 6: Cruse, Gregory, Triptow, Trina Robbins 2.00

GAY COMIX 7 Robert Triptow edits ________ 2.00

HAROLD HEDD 1: Holmes' oversize full page treats! 2.50

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HAROLD HEDD in Hitler's Cocaine 1: Part 1 of all-color adventure by **Holmes** 2.00

HAROLD HEDD in Hitler's Cocaine 2: exciting conclusion of **Holmes'** the adventure featuring Harold and Elmo, all-color. ***(The color) Harold Hedd comic is bitchin"! It's one of the best u.g.'s ever made."*** **—Robert Williams.** 2.00

HEARTBREAK: featuring Lazlo, Hungarian lover and Reid Fleming. By **Boswell.** 2.50

HOMEGROWN: R. Crumb's classic Yeti and Whiteman tale. Also Mr. Snoid 2.00

HUP! *NEW* **R. Crumb** comic has three great stories featuring the Ruff Tuff Creampuffs, Mr. Natural, and more Crumb's troubles with women. ________ 2.50

HYPER: Solo laff riot by **Steve Stiles.** ________ **A BARGAIN AT** 1.00

JOEL BECK'S COMICS: earliest underground cartoonist. Funny stuff. **JUST** 1.00

JUNKWAFFEL No. 5: Vaughn Bode's last great comic. Cheech Wizard, etc 2.50

KNOCKABOUT No. 4: Hunt Emerson and other English artists on censorship. 2.00

KNOCKABOUT 6: Emerson, Cliff Harper; British underground. ________ 2.00

KURTZMAN KOMIX: Mad, Help pioneer's early strips. Influential and charming 1.00

LEATHER NUN: Sheridan, Crumb, Spain. ________ 1.50

LONELY NIGHTS: Dori Seda's HOT book examines the underside of romance in this funny and nasty collection introduced by **R. Crumb.** ________ 2.00

MIAMI MICE 1 Mark Bode spoofs TV and funny animals. Hot! ________ 2.00

MIAMI MICE 2: More adventures with rodents in the city! 2.00

MIAMI MICE 3: More hot adventures from **Mark Bode!** 2.00

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MICKEY RAT 4: Bob Armstrong's rodent puts the Mouse guy to shame! ________ 1.50

MEGATON MAN is Don Simpson's hilarious creation that parodies superheroes and situations. Sprightly satire!

MEGATON MAN No. 3:	2.00	MEGATON MAN No. 7:	2.00
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MEGATON MAN No. 5:	2.00	MEGATON MAN No. 9:	2.00
MEGATON MAN No. 6:	2.00	MEGATON MAN No. 10	2.00

MR. NATURAL 3: R. Crumb's character gets committed! ________ 2.00

MOD: Terry Beatty, Bob (Flaming Carrot) Burden spoof new wave, EC comics. 1.50

MONDO SNARFO: Kitchen, Griffith, Crumb surrealism. Tough! Weird! **JUST** 1.00

MU: The Land that Never Was: George Metzger s-f fantasy about Atlantis 1.00

NARD n' PAT 2: Jay Lynch's classic duo in great stories! 52-pages ________ 1.75

OMAHA 1 NEW EDITION! Waller & Worley's saga of the Cat Dancer ***(See BIZARRE SEX 5, 9 & 10 and SNARF 10 for the beginning of the story)*** 2.00

OMAHA 2: NEW EDITION!! Waller & Worley's Cat Dancer saga continues! 2.00

OMAHA 3: ALL NEW!! Now a bi-monthly comic from KSP. Omaha finds herself gently held in Tubby's clutches. The plot thickens! ________ 2.00

OMAHA 4: Chuck and Omaha reunited! But there's a cloud on the horizon. 2.00

OMAHA 5: KSP's bi monthly comic with Waller & Worley 2.00

PEOPLE'S COMICS: R. Crumb kills Fritz the Cat. A laff riot! 2.00

PHOEBE & the Pigeon People 1. Lynch-Whitney satirize urban life **JUST** 1.00

PHOEBE & the Pigeon People 2: semi-surreal strip featuring Bix the Beat Pigeon. 1.25

PHOEBE & the Pigeon People 3: Large size & hilarious. ________ 1.50

POWER PAK 1 Aline Kominsky's biting look at herself and life ________ **JUST** 1.00

POWER PAK 2: more sharp autobiographical comics by **Aline Kominsky.** 1.25

REID FLEMING, World's Toughest Milkman 1: Is this the funniest Canadian comic ever published? See the tough, macho milkman fight for his right not to take any guff! David Boswell is the artist and writer. Great stuff! ________ 2.50

We have a limited number of Rip Off comix 5-12 available. Nos. 5-10 are comix-sized; 11 & 12 are magazines and have color sections. All feature Gilbert Shelton's Freak Bros. plus a variety of other comics and features of interest. Enjoy!

RIP OFF 5	1.50	RIP OFF 10	1.50
RIP OFF 6	1.50	RIP OFF 11	2.95
RIP OFF 8	1.50	RIP OFF 12	2.95
RIP OFF 9	1.50		

RIP OFF 13: BIG COMEBACK ISSUE! Coming soon! **Features Shelton & the Freaks, plus European Comix. 52 pages** ________ 2.95

SLOW DEATH 10: special issue looks at (gulp) cancer. The late **Greg Irons** reaches a peak in storytelling! ________ 1.50

SMILE 2: collection of early **Kitchen, Mitchell** comic strips **Limited supply! JUST** 1.00

SNAPPY SAMMY SMOOT: Skip Williamson's hilarious stories about the bon vivant cultural hero. A classic and ________ **JUST** 1.00

SNARF 8 Cruse "Lulu" parody; John Pound cover ________ **JUST** 1.00

SNARF 9: Cabarga cover; **Crumb, Cruse, Kitchen** ________ 1.50

SNARF 10 ON SALE NOW: **Resurrection of the title has a Will Elder cover and work by Waller & Worley, Howard Cruse, J.D. King, Mary Fleener, many, many more!** ________ 2.00

SNOID COMIX: R. Crumb's nasty little guy struts his stuff in this classic comic 2.00

WIMMENS 8: long running series entirely by women. ________ 2.00

WIMMENS 9: Lee Marrs, Trina, The Bunch, Mary Wilshire more! ________ 2.00

WIMMENS 10: Lineup includes **Wilshire, Rudahl, Robbins** 2.00

TIME TWISTED TALES: NEW COLLECTION of the late **Dave Sheridan's** bizarre surreal strips. 8 New Pages! 2.00

TITS & CLITS 5: Satire on sexual politics. ________ 2.00

TITS & CLITS 6: Sex and satire by women 2.00

BACK ISSUES ALL AVAILABLE

WEIRDO 1-9 was edited by Robert Crumb, who contributed covers and stories. Peter Bagge was the editor for issues 10 through 16, with Crumb still contributing covers and stories. With issue 16, Alan Kupmsky-Crumb takes over the editorship, and she continues the title's tradition of iconoclastic material by new, old and mostly weird artists.

WEIRDO 1	2.25	WEIRDO 10	2.50
WEIRDO 2	2.25	WEIRDO 11	2.50
WEIRDO 3	2.25	WEIRDO 12	2.50
WEIRDO 4	2.25	WEIRDO 13	2.50
WEIRDO 5	2.50	WEIRDO 14	2.50
WEIRDO 6	2.50	WEIRDO 15	2.50
WEIRDO 7	2.50	WEIRDO 16	2.50
WEIRDO 8	2.50	WEIRDO 17	2.50
WEIRDO 9	2.50	WEIRDO 18 NEW!	2.50

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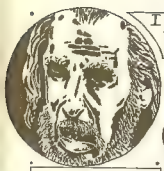


I don't give a damn how much it costs or what extremes must be resorted to, I say Nevada is no longer so desperate for mere existence that it has to accept and swallow with a smile poisonous, contaminated radioactive waste...

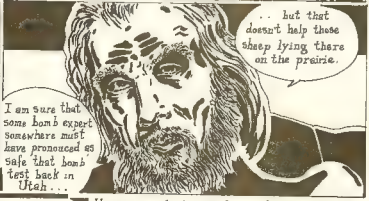
...MORE HORRIBLE THAN HUMAN EXCREMENT*

How did it all begin?

It was 1966 I was working in Las Vegas for Mr. Howard Hughes

His was watching *The Conquerer* ... again

He couldn't get his mind off those A bomb tests out in the desert Or the dead sheep.

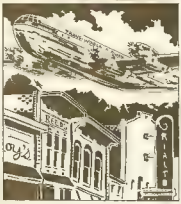


His visions of atomic plague faded into the gloom. It was 1955 again in the old guy's bedroom.

The superstar producer's Most Expensive Adventure was just beginning

* A true story.

It was to be his masterwork- the mighty tale of Genghis Khan retold as only Hollywood could retell it.



He chose a shoot site near the Mormon stronghold of St. George and sent a cast & crew of 220..

into the Utah desert. Snow Canyon was an empty, isolated place, but it wasn't UNTOUCHED BY HUMAN HANDS!

From how far away had the radioactive contamination come?

Radiation blew in on the dust from the Yucca Flat bomb test site 137 miles away

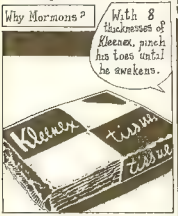
Sparing no expense in his attempts at realism, Mr Hughes shipped tons of "hot" dirt to Hollywood

Nobody took it seriously

The Conqueror made $4½ million in 1956

Mr Hughes quit Hollywood after that.

Resolved to dedicate himself to movies, TV, money and hygiene, he holed up in a sterilized hotel room and surrounded himself with Mormons



Mormons are the very soul of whitebread-a clean people with ties to the intelligent industry.

We take directions exceedingly well.

We staffed his kitchen and the Howard R. Hughes Perpetual Repertory Cinema.

Outside this room the Mongol Epic was forgotten. . *BUT NOT GONE!!*

Back in Hollywood...

Illness surfaced among the cast & crew of the film.

Word spread of a poisonous cloud dubbed *Dirty Harry*.

On June 13, 1963, Pedro Armendariz committed suicide in an L.A. hospital.

Strangely, he begs for death at the end of *The Conqueror*.

There was collateral ovine morbidity round Yucca Flat, sure, but nothing extreme.

Extreme? You're talking about radiation sickness, Master!

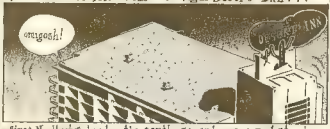
The contamination of his film crew disturbed Mr. Hughes deeply.

He began to fill a closet with wine.

Had testing of multi-megaton nuclear weapons in the Southwest been halted by 1966?

Not exactly.

Aftershocks were felt in the Las Vegas Desert Inn . . .



Since Mr Hughes lived in the penthouse and was a nudist, he was more keenly aware of them than anyone else there.

Then there were the sheep.

It was Yucca Flat once again!

We must draw the public's attention to the plight of the sheep in Utah.

What do you want us to do?

Screen me The Conqueror.

Which print, sir?

He needed Washington help. An insider. He found an old party professional fresh out of Kennedy's . . .

. . . Larry O'Brien.

Hughes' money flooded the Capitol, silently taming one and all.

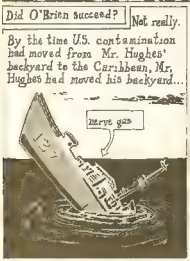
Between detonations the *mega-mogul* concentrated on other projects

He maintained a touching intimacy with an elite corps of console TVs.

Did O'Brien succeed?

Not really.

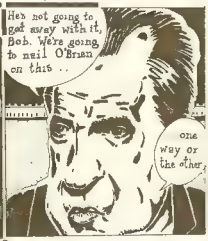
By the time U.S. contamination had moved from Mr. Hughes' backyard to the Caribbean, Mr. Hughes had *moved his backyard*...



... to the Caribbean.

By 1972 O'Brien had left for a greater challenge: the Democrats.

Visions of political ruin exploded inside Nixon's pear-shaped head.



Who was caught at the Watergate?

Nobody took it seriously.

Two freelance spooks and four professional anti-communists.

At his Paradise Island retreat, Mr. Hughes laved on movies and fresh drawn Mormon blood.

...the curse of *The Conqueror* had begun to blossom.

Dismayed at his TV reception, Mr Hughes became restless.

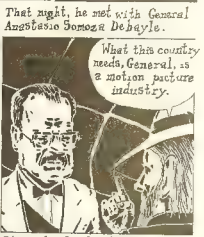
His private jet was seen in London, Vancouver, Mexico City.

He was in Managua during the 1972 earthquake.

Aftershocks drove the billionaire into the streets.

Deeply shaken, he washed.

That night, he met with General Anastasio Somoza Debayle.



It was his first public appearance in 18 years . . . and his last.

1974 . . .
Nixon was gone.
Dick Powell and Agnes Moorehead were dead. Susan Hayward was dying.
And the Duke was shooting Rooster Cogburn.
Care for some baba ganoush, John?
No thanks, Katie, I'll just have some red meat and diet soda
I knew Howard Hughes, uh, before.
A great American, don't cha think?
Mr Hughes began to experiment with various forms of unconsciousness, sampling cocaine . . .
. . and settling finally upon death
We were 3,000 feet over Texas when the curse came home.
At least he died clean
Are you crazy? This body reeks!
Whatever became of all that contaminated dirt?
The dirt? Nobody kept track of it
Awright sweetheart, now strode into the valley, and look sincere!
It might've hung 'round Hollywood for years.
END
© 1987 by Gilbert Hernandez

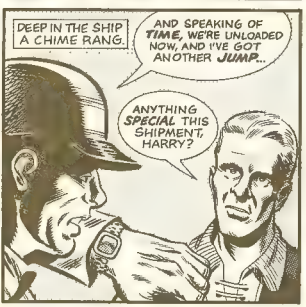
THE ARRIVALS

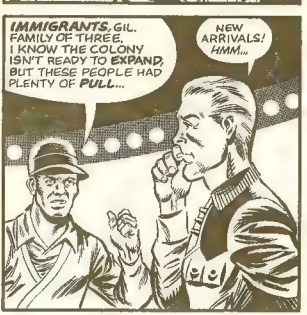
THE SUDDEN RUMBLE GREW LOUDER IN THE WARM CINNAMON SKY OF FERRIS II AS THE COLONISTS PUT DOWN THEIR FARM TOOLS, LEAVING THEIR RICH FIELDS TO GAZE UP, SQUINTING AT THE SHINING DOT THAT EXPANDED ABOVE THEM UNTIL THE SOUND OF STARSHIP ENGINES FILLED THE SUMMER AIR. COMPANY WAS COMING!

STORY & ART

Art Carbunkle Scan 01 17 06

CAPTAIN WEIR SMILED DOWN AT HIS OLD FRIEND, AS THE NOMINAL HEAD OF THE SMALL COLONY ELBOWED HIS WAY THROUGH THE EXCITED CROWD. IT WAS A PITY THAT THIS WOULD BE A SHORT STOP-OVER, WITH NO TIME FOR OLD TIMES OVER A FEW ROUNDS OF POKER...





AND, AH, HERE THEY ARE NOW!

SO LONG, GIL!
ERB'S THE NAME! ERB BEAMSDERFER!

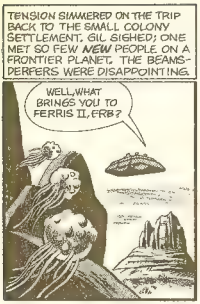
AND THIS IS OUR BOY, DOUGLAS! SAY HELLO TO THE MAN, DOUGIE!
NO! DON' WANNA!

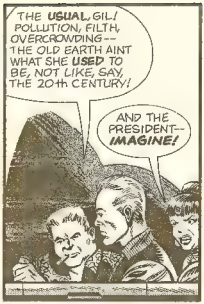
AND MY WIFE, ILDA...
HMPH!

IS THERE..?
A PROBLEM? JUST BECAUSE WE'VE BEEN STANDING HERE ABANDONED FOR THE PAST HALF HOUR, YOU THINK THERE'S A PROBLEM?

NOW, ILDA...
DON'T YOU "NOW ILDA" ME, ERB BEAMSDERFER!
POW! DIE, PROXIE SPY!

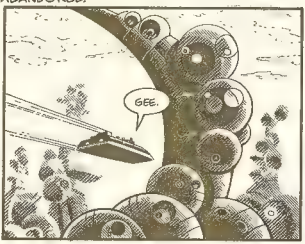
GIL TURNED TO THE WAITING HOVERVAN, SHUTTING OUT ILDA'S SHRILL, NAGGING VOICE. BEHIND THEM, UNNOTICED, THE SHIP ROSE ON A PILLAR OF FLAME, DWINDLED, VANISHED...

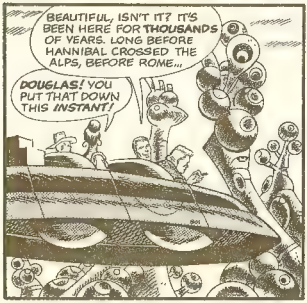




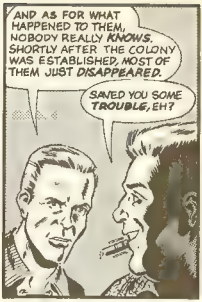
YES, A DISAPPOINTMENT. GIL FELT A BRIEF STAB OF ANGER AT THE HUMAN RACE... TO HAVE COME SO FAR...

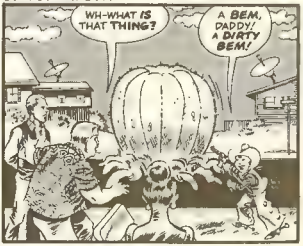
THEY DRIFTED THROUGH THE SILENT ALIEN TOWN, THE EMPTY SILICA TOWERS SPARKLING UNDER THE SUN, FLAWLESS AND SHINING. A WONDROUS ELFIN PLACE--DEAD AND ABANDONED.





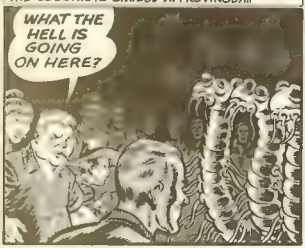
A VERY GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT...





ERB'S MOUTH TWITCHED WITH DISGUST. GIL SMILED REASSURINGLY...
SEE THAT FLY ABOVE IT? NOW WATCH...
A MEMBRANE ATOP THE HUGE ALIEN DILATED AS A KNOTTY APPENDAGE, NOT UNLIKE A TONGUE, SHOT OUT...
SNAP!
NEVER MISSES!
GOOD LORD!
SORRY THEY BOTHER YOU, ERB, BECAUSE YOU'RE GOING TO BE SEEING A LOT MORE K'RIL TONIGHT--BACK AT THEIR VILLAGE!
LRP!
WHAT?
IT'S A COLONY CUSTOM, ERB. THE K'RIL HAVE A LITTLE GREETING CEREMONY FOR NEW ARRIVALS. SORT OF AN INITIATION. EVERYONE GOES THROUGH IT...
OH BOY! CAN WE, DAD? CAN WE?
WELL...
IT HAD TAKEN HOURS OF PERSUASION; ILDA HAD OBJECTED, OF COURSE, BUT IN THE END THEY HAD SET OFF FOR THE K'RIL TOWN. THE WHOLE COLONY TURNED OUT FOR THE CEREMONY...
THE K'RIL WERE WAITING, LESS THAN A DOZEN OF THEM, THEIR AWKWARD BULKS SWAYING IN THE FLICKERING FLAMES OF THE CEREMONIAL FIRE. THEY SEEMED TO BE DANCING...
TAKE A GOOD LOOK, SON! SOMEDAY THOSE THINGS WILL BE IN A ZOO!
THE DANCE PICKED UP TEMPO AS THE SWAYING, SILENT ALIENS MOVED BETWEEN THE LEAPING FLAMES. THE COLONISTS LEANED FORWARD EXPECTANTLY. SOMETHING WAS ABOUT TO HAPPEN...
YEAH, OR ON RESERVATIONS. MAYBE STUFFED IN MUSEUMS... SAY...
SOMETHING ROSE UP THROUGH THE GROUND, THREE TENDRILS OF VAPOR TWISTING, SOLIDIFYING...

SOLIDIFYING INTO THREE NARROW FORMS THAT DRIFTED ACROSS THE CLEARING, DRIFTING TOWARDS ERB, ILDA, AND LITTLE DOUGLAS... THE COLONISTS SMILED APPROVINGLY...



THE THINGS WERE ALMOST ON THEM, REACHING OUT. ERB CURSED AND TRIED TO DRAW BACK, BUT THE COLONISTS WERE PUSHING THEM FORWARD, PINNING THEIR ARMS. IT WAS TIME.

ILDA SCREAMED THE LOUDEST. GIL KNEW SHE WOULD.

EPILOG: THEY HEARD THE SHIP FROM OLD EARTH LONG BEFORE THEY SAW IT FLASHING IN THE SUN, THE DULL RUMBLE GROWING LOUDER IN THE WARM SUMMER SKY. COMPANY!

COMPANY WAS COMING! THE FINGER OF FLAME GREW BRIGHTER NOW AS THEY PUT DOWN THEIR FARM TOOLS IN PERFECT UNIFORMITY, LEAVING THEIR RICH FIELDS, HURRYING TO THE LANDING AREA. ALL IN STEP, AS ONE BODY.

GIL STARED UP AT THE ONCOMING EARTH SHIP. IT WOULD BE NICE TO SEE CAPTAIN WEIR AGAIN..

...GOOD TO TALK OVER OLD TIMES, THE PROXIE WAR, AND EARTH AND ALL ITS DOMINIONS...

AND MAYBE IF GIL WAS LUCKY, JUST MAYBE...

...A FEW HANDS OF POKER!

END

FANG MAIL

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NO TURDS

Death Rattle is the only horror comic worth reading, and not because it deals strictly with the "horror" genre, but because it consistently presents well-written stories. Quality writing, is, as we all must painfully admit, a rare thing in the comics field. Somebody in your club has a good eye for a story, and a keen sense of what horror really is about—the fear of death. This genuine feeling of horror is present in every one of your issues I can recall.

Slimy monsters and dripping eyeballs anyone can draw (although no one better than Rand Holmes), but few can write a story capturing history and detail like Jaxon, and the sheer delight of reading a short, sick piece by Mike Baron is always worth the cover price.

One of the more attractive elements to *Death Rattle* is the variety of the pieces—every story is not your conventional werewolf/vampire/slasher/psycho /Bruce Jones/bogus suspense/comic horror piece. And that is exactly what I was saying earlier about horror: the shadow of death exists in many aspects of life, ordinary and extraordinary, and *Death Rattle* is not afraid to swing to the extremes. Take issue 11: Korean War, robots, and a bowling league. Not that every story is a gem, or even good, but every one is worth reading—not a turd to be found. And that is a pretty good record.

S. Keister
Culver City CA

BIRTHDAY PRESENTS

Got all your issues and want more!

Your editorial in issue 11 has me pretty worried about your future, and thought that perhaps if all us loyal readers were to offer some input, you'd know you are a needed piece of Americana.

Okay, what I don't like about the comic are the articles and serials. But if you want to please everyone all the time, you're nuts!

The greatest thing about *Death Rattle* is that I honestly don't know what the hell to expect when I get each new issue. It's like getting a birthday present. You never fail to surprise. Take, for instance, the cover for No. 11. I'd frame this type of thing for my cave wall were it not for the fact that I don't tear my comix apart.

And the story, "Mirror," being a Lovecraft freak, it really blew my socks off (which needed changing anyway). Excellent job by Eric Vincent! Where's he been all my life? Can ya get him to do more stories?

I suspect you have many closet readers who don't dare admit they enjoy D.R. You don't, thank the gods, subscribe to censorship of any sort, and I suspect this makes most readers uneasy. I guess it would be better if you did fold before compromising on this particular point.

In your "good old days" of volume one, the underground comix were usually crude and rough around the edges. The new D.R. is a highly polished, top notch production. It goes beyond underground or new wave—I like to think the new D.R. as *comique noveau*—how's that for a superlative when all else fails?

So you can see why you don't get more letters: there's a lot of people out here who enjoy the hell out of D.R. but can't really pigeonhole any known form of conversation about it. It's a real trip to step out of reality into the pages of D.R. each new and glorious issue—and it can't be anything but fun to produce it. Please keep it up.

S. E. Goodrich
Box 457 So. Colton NY 13687

A state of worry can only add to the desired quotient of anxiety we want our readers of DEATH RATTLE to have while perusing this title. Nothing is permanent; everything is unstable... Eric Vincent has been in the South for most of your life, but if you like his art and story, it can be found in ALIEN FIRE, the third issue of which is at the printer. Issues one and two available from your favorite shop or from us. And look, if you really want to decorate your cave with the cover of No. 11, why not buy another copy and deface that? Better yet, have you considered the cumulative effect of wallpapering with covers? We'd be glad to supply the raw materials. Is there anything else we can plug? Well, maybe not in this letter—but there are others.

NOT FAR ENOUGH

Death Rattle 11 was diverse, to say the least. I found the stories all quite interesting.

Will the real Robert Ingersoll please stand up? I honestly can't decide which I enjoy more, his work in this title, or his column in *CBG*.

"Junk" was far from it. An unusual tale of devotion, well-drawn and well-written.

"In Lease with the Devil" didn't take the story far enough, but I still found it pretty good.

"Mirror" should be broken into little pieces and scattered to the winds. Interesting, but confusing.

Kiril Kundurazieff
2439 Merrywood St., Pomona CA 91767

MASTERPIECES GALORE

I found your magazine at No. 3, bought it on a fluke, and have been highly impressed with the quality of each issue. The art, covers and stories have all been great.

In issue 8, I enjoyed the "Xenozoic" preview, and "Last Exit" was not bad. "Horror Fan," on the other hand, was really, really good. I hope you keep Dan Burr on this book. I love his art.

No. 9 was a masterpiece! As I sit here with it in front of me, the Rand Holmes cover bright as a beacon, I marvel at this man's art. The detail is cool; his art has a quality no other artist has. "A Child of the Media" is the best story to hit these hallowed pages so far. The story and art combined for a "10."

"Snowy Owl" was also a good story. The art was not bad, but the story was better. Another "10."

And finally, "The Eye of Doom." Not much to say here except: *the more Basil Wolverton, the better!!*

All in all, an astonishing issue. I love *Death Rattle* and you will never keep me from buying it. Thanks for the best comic in the business.

Chris Bevard
Galesburg IL.

Thanks for your high opinions. Dan Burr is preparing, along with writer James Vance, a six-issue miniseries to be published by us sometime soon. It's called KINGS IN DISGUISE, and exaggeration and the normal hype aside, it's safe to say you've never seen anything like it in comics before. Watch for it from us; coming soon. (Got another plug in, too.)

PREVENTS FITS OF RAGE

I've bought every issue of *Death Rattle*, and will continue to do so as long as it exists. Its quality has never let me down.

I picked up issue 1 at my local comics shop, didn't even scan through it first because I was sold on the gorgeous Corben cover. The quality of the color inside was the best I had seen in comics.

The best thing about your book, in my opinion, is the use of old underground cartoonists. Rand Holmes is my favorite—a comix genius! I've followed his work since *Harold Hedd*. Every story he has done for D.R. is a classic. My favorite was "Junkyard Dog" in issue five. I hope you plan to keep him in print.

Other stories I've enjoyed are Steve Stiles' "Mind Siege," Spain's "Blue Boot" and Jaxon's "Bulto." I'm glad to see that good underground talent isn't being wasted. Other highlights I've enjoyed were the Wolverton reprints and the Ed Gein research. Powerful stuff!

I was saddened to see the color go [after issue 5], but was not let down by the story lines and the artistic talent. Black and white never looked better.

My favorite issue was No. 5. I don't have an issue I particularly hate. The quality of D.R. has led me to purchase other fine Kitchen Sink publications. *Omaha, Megaton Man, Border Worlds, Xenozoic Tales*, etc. I feel the KSP line is about the best on the market.

At present, reading issue 11, I must say that you've still lived up to my expectations with the book. Don't kill this title; without my annual dosage of *Death Rattle*, I might have terrible seizures or violent fits of rage. The book helps me keep my grip. You wouldn't want some demented, depraved, twisted soul set loose on the public, would you?

Argus Roy Smith
777 Silver Springs, Wichita KS 67212

Gosh no, Argus Roy! Anybody who buys and plugs our books like you do should stay outside the walls!

LOVE AND HATE

Death Rattle is one of my favorite comics and definitely the best anthology book on the market. I'm at an odd point in my life right now where, while I relish *Love and Rockets, Watchmen* and *The Spirit*, I find myself increasingly embarrassed purchasing *The Green Lantern Corps* and *Airboy*. So what does that have to do with *Death Rattle* 9? Simple: "Child of the Media" is an awkward blend of the things I've grown to love and hate about comics.

The script was, simply, one of the best ever to run in these pages. I have long been a fan of Bob Ingersoll, finding him to be the only regular contributor to *CBG* that I can stomach. This powerful, biting piece of social commentary represents the kind of important statements comics can make.

However, this statement was seriously hindered by Rand Holmes' art. I think Mr. Holmes has a lot of talent—his detail and ability to capture mood are top notch. However, his preoccupation with grossly oversized and overemphasized breasts really takes away from the gritty realism of the story. I mean, is it really necessary to have every female endowed with breasts the like I have NEVER seen on a real life female? The panel at the bottom of the first two-page spread, where Rico is tying up the Sapce Ride Operator, is the kind of thing would-be censors love to point out as encouraging rape fantasies. I mean, come on, is it necessary to have the woman's breasts pushed out in front of her, nipples erect?? This was hardly in Bob Ingersoll's mind when he wrote this very serious story, and, to me, anyway, diminished the effectiveness of the tale. I'd be inclined to buy copies of this book for some non-comics fans for this story, if it weren't for this disappointing aspect of the artwork. I'm very upset. Please try to avoid this in the future. *Death Rattle* is a more quality publication than that. It's kind of hard to show the general public how much comics have grown up when they contain this sort of junior high school peekaboo mentality.

Karl Heitmueller
20 Urban Dr., Lancaster PA 17603

Well, it's an interesting can of worms you open. For one thing, it's odd you don't mention the extreme violence of the piece—both the physical and psychological. We think part of Ingersoll's point was that Rico was a tortured man and tortured others in his turn. Quite aside from all the killing he did, that is. It's doubtful that Holmes was aiming to encourage rape fantasies in this decidedly unromantic but dramatic story. Rico's binding of the woman is logical within the frame of the story—it makes story sense—and the scene is just one more block in the foundation of a grim, relentless ten pages. As for the woman having large breasts and erect nipples, regular readers of Holmes' work know it is a stylistic convention of his to draw large-breasted women—and well-muscled and developed men, for that matter. We decline to tell him—anyone—how to draw. For one thing, we try to act as censors as little as possible. For another, we can't think of another artist who could have lavished the amount of craft on this deserving story that Holmes did. It needed to have a detailed "street" feel, a feeling it was really happening. There was no other choice for us but Holmes simply because we wanted the best work possible. Finally, the book carries a label, and frankly, DEATH RATTLE is not necessarily meant to be someone's primary introduction to comics.

SPIRIT IS WILLING

As much as I appreciate the spirit behind *Death Rattle*, I can't honestly say that I've been blown away by the actual content of recent issues. Both "Child of the Media" and "The Snowy Owl" were well-written but unremarkable stories. Robert M. Ingersoll's point seemed to be that if an individual is utterly loopy, he is likely to misinterpret what he sees on the screen. Hardly profound.

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Someone like Americo Giannelli doesn't frighten me as much as those who would like to put curbs on all media, prompted by their wrong-headed, un-American belief that a person isn't responsible for their own actions. It's true that we all are influenced by what we see and hear and of course 97 per cent of that input, music, movies, TV, books, comics and advertising, can most charitably be described as nonsense. But what is the solution to this problem? The solution is for us to grow up and educate ourselves to the point where we are capable of questioning every fantasy someone is trying to impress on us.

No doubt page 10 of this story was intended as irony, but you can be sure that somebody, somewhere saw Americo's death as beautiful. We can only hope that person's fantasies stay locked inside their skull. But what if the next mass assassin is found with a copy of *Death Rattle* 9 in his back pocket? There are a lot of Americans who would immediately ascribe a percentage of the blame to Ingersoll and Kitchen Sink. Now that gives me the shivers.

But I'm getting off the point. I don't take argument with this story; I just don't think it really addressed the issue.

Reading "The Snowy Owl," I was wondering if the writer had managed to come up with a variation on this dusty old theme. I didn't feel real let down when he didn't. I just wish your writers were a little more ambitious. Charles Burns' "Ill Bred" and Jaxon's "Bulto" have been my favorite pieces because they took us to places we've never been before.

So this is what you get for trying to deal with a discriminating clientele. But a horror comic is a lot like rock 'n roll. The spirit is just as important as the technique. Black and white? Fine by me. Cheaper paper? I'm still here. Mini-series crossovers? That's where I start to draw the line, but I have more faith in you than that. You keep trying and I'll keep reading.

John Egan
1557 Newlands Ave., Burlington CA 94010

'WORLD OF TOMORROW'

For me, the undoubted highlight of *Death Rattle* 9 was "Child of the Media," a story depicting a horror which has already occurred on a number of occasions. A compelling tale, indeed, and the touches which impressed me most were the irony of the opening paragraph: "the glimpse into the next century" when considered with "we'll see more of this type of tragedy" on the last page. The "World of Tomorrow" certainly did "make quite an impact." Also chilling was the way in which Giannelli thought the gods gave him their sign at his pre-massacre viewing of "The Wild Bunch," as shown by the stains in his discarded clothing.

...*Death Rattle* 10 had a stunning, disturbing Charles Burns cover that whetted my appetite for another full-length story from him. "Sideshow," after a promising beginning, turned out to have a very whiskery old conclusion, but was redeemed by the visual excellence of Rand Holmes' art.

The "Mother Goose" and "Somerset Maugham" features were interesting and entertaining and indicative of your willingness to experiment, and reminded me nostalgically of the early '70s Marvel black and white horror mags features and articles. Your stuff is far more sophisticated, however, and I hope you continue to present this kind of material from time to time.

"Savage World" is a kind of endearingly dumb story. I find that I actually prefer Wally Wood's script to Bruce Jones' "Land of Fire" (which appeared in *Alien Worlds* 6, by the way, not No. 3, as appeared in the text). Jones' script was knowingly tongue-in-cheek of course, but the *Witzend* version has a loopy, straight-faced and stiff-upper-lip sincerity that is beyond parody. Good old Buster recovers from direct exposure to the effects of an H-bomb explosion just in time to deliver the moral of the story. Delightful stuff!

Of course, it's the art that is the important element here. The work of Williamson, Krenkel, Frazetta and Torres blends into an almost seamless and cohesive whole, and even though the pacing is rushed and jerky, the individual panels are beautiful to look at. Dave Schreiner brought to the introduction the same scholarly touch that he bestows on "Stage Settings" in *The Spirit*, and the background information was very interesting. This kind of thing gives a well-rounded feel to the package; it's the enthusiastic touch that makes the *Mr. Monster Specials* so inviting, and it's much appreciated by those of us who care about the history of the medium.

Keep up the good work!

Chris Green
Cleethorpes South Humberside DN35 8QP England

HIGH STANDARDS

So, you thought you could finally lay *Death Rattle* to rest, did you? HAH! You should know better than to try to "plant" such a thing in the fertile soil of Wisconsin, the state which spawned Ed Gein and Arkham House, among others!

Seriously though, it's ironic that this title might go the way of the stegosaurus, especially in light of the seemingly endless permutations of "Bug Boy vs. Captain

Cockroach" (©, all rights reserved), which glut the stands. I assume your request for LOCs is by way of saying, "So what are we doing right?"

First, there are some aspects of *Death Rattle* which have never fallen below a certain high standard. These, to my mind, would be the art and characterization. Simply put, I don't think I've ever seen a bad, or even mediocre, piece of art work in the book (with the possible exception of the cover of No. 11, which looked like a rush job, and even *that* had a wonderfully eerie photo as its basis). Some of your artists, notably Jaxon and Rand Holmes, maintain such a high degree of excellence that it's easy to see why they've become "regulars," a policy I would generally discourage in an anthology title. Likewise, characterization is generally clear; the various "players" are usually developed as distinct personalities, at least to the degree possible in a short comic story.

Plotting...here things become more problematical. My objections fall into two categories (and only for a small percentage of your material): stories in which I can guess the ending after a few pages, and stories I read just to find out how they end. This may sound like niggling, and perhaps rightly so, but a magazine of your caliber deserves more concise criticism than "More blood!" and "Don't use big words."

My first objection is the more difficult, since it's almost built into the form. I've heard that there are only five basic plots, and there's certainly nothing wrong with variations on an old plot like "The Old Dark House" or "The Thing in the Pit." "Poltergeist" was an interesting variation on the first theme; "Alien" of the second. In both cases, it should be noted that the basic, overall plot was familiar (sometimes to the point of carrying on flaws in earlier versions). It is in the telling and the details showed their uniqueness. It's not enough to update a theme.

All this suggests a solution to my other objection: if a story is headed toward a seemingly inevitable conclusion, hopefully the writer and artist can add enough unique details to make for an interesting trip.

Rather than criticize individual stories, allow me to mention those I've enjoyed, and why: "Bulto." It's all been said already, except for a request—please print it in a single book and do it in *color*. "Xenozoic!" Killer Planet." "Junkyard Dog." All very visual, and filled with interesting detail. Comics are primarily a visual medium (regardless of the need for solid writing), and stories heavily dependent on dialogue or "psychological horror" aren't as interesting to me, at least in a comic. "Razorface:" proof that psychological horror can be done interestingly in a comics format. In this case, it's the artist's unique visual style which added something that wouldn't be found in a text version of the same story. Also proof that a story doesn't need weird creatures or unusual settings to be visually interesting (the above comments also apply somewhat to Charles Burns' "Ill Bred").

It's unfortunate that a genre as durable as that which *Death Rattle* deals in is so skimpily represented on the stands. Here's hoping you survive long enough to overcome distribution problems. Until the Bates Motel installs crushed velvet and heart-shaped beds, I remain enthusiastic.

Paul J. Salscheider
Milwaukee WI

TRUTHFUL STORY

I saw the play *Tracers* about a week before I picked up *Death Rattle* 9. It portrayed the Vietnam War as realistically as "Platoon," without the special effects. The media's role was only touched on lightly. After reading "Child of the Media" my first thought was, "If I hadn't just seen that play, Rico would seem like a stereotype of a Vietnam vet to me." Then I realized: if I DID think of him as such, it would be because of the media. Quite a truthful story.

James Lindbloom
Poughkeepsie NY

BEST BOOK GOING

Death Rattle is the best book going. I am overjoyed to see Rand Holmes, one of the '70s most polished and provocative talents contributing regularly to it. Keep him working! He draws the most delicious women in the business!

Jaxon is a delight, also! "God's Bosom" was a perfect marriage of historical matter and art, and since it was told in Jaxon's usual no-nonsense manner, it made for a shocking and haunting tale. "Bulto" matches it in quality, but I'd prefer non-serialized stories in the future.

Less text, also. The Ed Gein story was extremely well done, but a little too long. I didn't feel so much state background was necessary.

But folks, keep this great book going!

Jerry Boyd
Santa Clara CA

We'll try. Since the next few books are not being done in winter, Rand Holmes will not be with us for a while. In summer, he takes time off to build on his property on a Canadian island. But Jaxon's back with "Bulto," and eventually we're going to see the conclusion of this story about a lovable slug and the silver he trails behind him. Watch for Holmes in winter issues.

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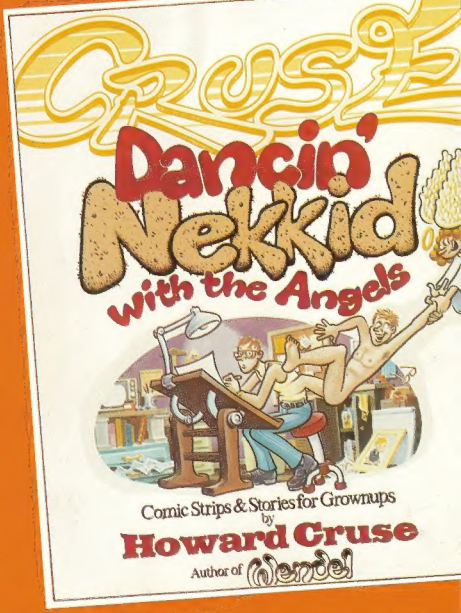

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